

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7217

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMCONSUL ZANZIBAR BY POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAR ES SALAAM 0102

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, PINR, TZ, IT

SUBJECT: NEW TANZANIAN AMBASSADOR TO ROME

1. PRESIDENT NYERERE ON DECEMBER 28 NAMED MOHAMMED ALI FOUM AS TANZANIAN AMBASSADOR TO ITALY, REPLACING AMBASSADOR R. LUKINDO WHO HAS HELD POST SINCE 1961. AMBASSADOR FOUM, WHO HAS BEEN SERVING AS COUNSELLOR OF EMBASSY IN ADDIS ABABA, IS A ZANZIBARI WITH A HISTORY OF LEFT-WING MILITANCY.

2. FOUM WAS BORN IN ZANZIBAR JUNE 4, 1936, OF COMORIAN PARENTAGE. PRIOR TO ZANZIBAR'S INDEPENDENCE, HE WAS FOLLOWER OF A.M. BABU'S LEFT-WING FACTION IN ZANZIBAR NATIONALIST PARTY (ZNP), AND HE LEFT ZANZIBAR (ABANDONING WITHOUT LEAVE POST OF LABOR OFFICER IN PEMBA) TO JOIN ZNP OFFICE IN HAVANA, CUBA, WHERE HE REMAINED UNTIL 1964 ZANZIBAR REVOLUTION. HE THEN RETURNED HOME AND AFTER UNION OF TANGANYIKA AND ZANZIBAR JOINED NEW TANZANIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY. FOUM SERVED ON TANZANIAN PERMANENT UN DELEGATION 1964 - 1969, DISTINGUISHING HIMSELF BY VIRULENTLY ANTI-COLONIALIST SPEECHES ON "COMMITTEE OF 24" AND UNDISGUISED COLLUSION WITH SOVIET BLOC DELEGATIONS, AND HE ALSO SOUGHT ESTABLISH CONTACTS WITH AMERICAN BLACK MILITANT GROUPS. IN 1969 FOUM RETURNED DAR ES
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SALAAM AS DIRECTOR MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICAN DIVISION OF

FOREIGN MINISTRY, AND HE WAS MEMBER OF UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY DELEGATIONS IN 1969, 1970, AND 1971. HE SUBSEQUENTLY SERVED AS COUNSELLOR OF EMBASSY IN PEKING (1972-73) AND ADDIS ABABA (1973-DATE).

3. FOUM MARRIED LYDIA FOUM (B. AUGUST 3, 1943, UNITED STATES) WHILE IN CUBA; WIFE IS NOW TANZANIAN CITIZEN. THEY HAVE THREE CHILDREN. FOUM IS KNOWN TO HAVE LEARNED SPANISH DURING HIS CUBAN RESIDENCE.

4. COMMENT: FOUM'S FORMER MENTOR BABU IS NOW IN JAIL UNDER SENTENCE OF DEATH IN THE 1974 ZANZIBAR TREASON TRIAL, DURING WHICH FOUM HIMSELF WAS LOOSELY IMPLICATED. IT IS PROBLEMATIC WHETHER IT WOULD BE HEALTHY FOR HIM TO RETURN TO ZANZIBAR, AND THUS INTERESTING THAT HE CONTINUES TO RECEIVE PROMOTION IN THE UNITED REPUBLIC'S DIPLOMATIC SERVICE. HE CANNOT, HOWEVER, BE CONSIDERED A POLITICAL COMER, AND HIS ASSIGNMENT TO ROME MAY SUGGEST ITALY'S RELATIVELY LOW RANK IN TANZANIAN DIPLOMATIC PRIORITIES.

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